acc# 1999.44

Don Bosco School

Teacher: Mr.Usher
For: Pier Project
Section: S. Studies
Date due: 05,03,99
By: Lyn MacIntyre

My project is based on Don Bosco school. There were plans of a new school being built and Don Bosco being torn down. I visited the school and handed out a questionairre to the students asking questions about how they felt about their school being torn down. A few days after my visit to the school the old school was destroyed by a fire, so the children had to move to the French school on Disco Street until they made the new school.

When I went to the school, I asked each child four questions, they were, What do you think about the school being torn down? Do you enjoy going to this school or would you rather go to another school? What thing do you like best about your school? What thing do you dislike the most about your school?

I visited three classes, a grade three class, a grade four class, and a grade five class. When I got the results back from the summary, I saw the difference in the classes, and in some ways , the things that were in common.

Grade Five

Question number one:
What do you think about the school being torn down?

Answer: Most children said that they thought that it was a good idea for the school being torn down because it was too old and it would be a good experience to get to be in a whole new school. Since the school was destroyed, they get to be in the French school until a new school is built.

Question number two: Do you enjoy going to this school or would you rather go to another school.
Answer: Most children said that they would rather stay at there old school.

Question number three: What thing do you like the most about your school?
Answer: Most children liked the amount of field trips they would go on.

Question number four: What thing do you dislike the most about your school?
Answer: Most children were quite happy with Don Bosco School just the way it was!

Grade Four

Question number one: What do you think about your school being torn down?
Answer: Most children thought it was not a good idea to tear down their school.

Question number two: Do you enjoy going to this school or would you rather go to another school?
Answer: Most of the children said that they would rather stay in Don Bosco School instead of going to a new school.

Question number three: What thing do you like the best about your school?
Answer: Most of the children said that they liked the teachers the best in the school.

Question number four: What do you dislike the most about your school?
Answer: Most of the children didn't want anything to change about their school.

Grade Three

Question number one: What do you think about your school being torn down?
Answer: Most of the children were not very happy about the idea of their being torn down.

Question number two: Do you enjoy going to your school or would you rather go to another school?
Answer: Most children said that they would much rather stay right where they were.

Question number three: What thing do you like the most about your school?
Answer: Most children said that the best thing they liked about their school was their teachers.

Question number four: What thing do you dislike the most about your school?
Answer: Most children said that they didn't dislike anything about their school.

As you can clearly see there is much difference in the different grades, but also the similarity.

When Don Bosco was destroyed, they found a time capsule in the cornerstone of the school. I attended the opening of the box because my grandfather, Lorne MacIntyre, who in the past worked at the Historical Society, had been invited to the opening. He found out I was doing a project on the school and invited me to come. At the exhibit, there were many different people such as Sandra Dunn, who works at the Historical Society and many of the teachers and students who attended the school. Then when the time came, Charlie Barrington, a tinsmith, started to open the time capsle as we anxiously watched. When it was finally opened, inside were two newspapers and an envelope that read, "Colby Saint Josephs." Inside the envelope were four

stamps and five coins. Their prediction for the matter was in the former Colby School (Woodill) was the actual Don Bosco time capsle. So they took the outer wall out and as they suspected, the corner stone was still intact. They then took out the time capsule. Sadly I was not able to attened the opening. Yet, I was able to find out what was inside the capsle. The things in the first capsule were very similiar to the second. There were coins, two newspapers, and I am unsure if there was anything else.

I found my project very interesting because of many questions such as-Who put the objects into the capsule? When was it expected to be found? And by whom?

The History of Don Bosco School

Don Bosco Junior High was a nine room school built in 1952, during Mayor Anthony (Tony) Gallagher's term. At a later date a four room addition was built to accomodate the ever growing school population.

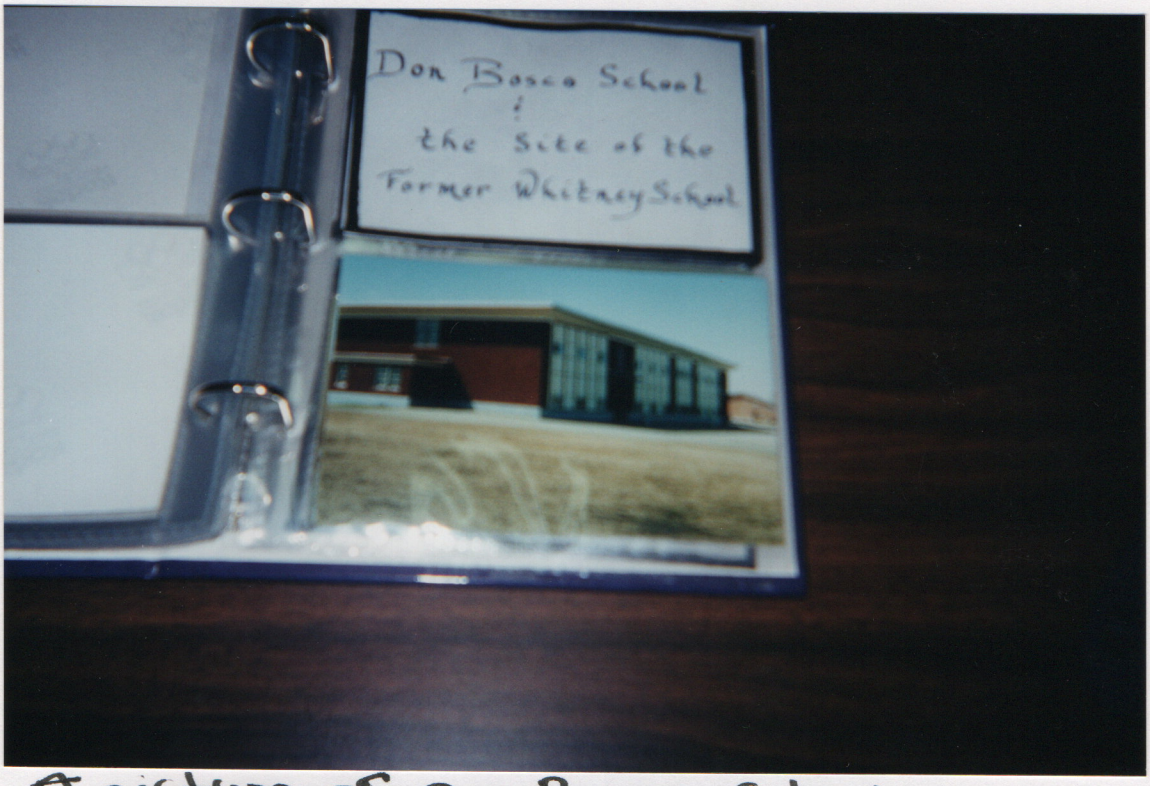
The first principle, who started in 1953, was the late John Angus Mac Neil who left Canada in 1966 to work in Basutoland. Michael Mac Neil followed him as principle in 1966 and remined until his retirement in June 1987.

The school remained a Junior High until Whitney Pier Memorial was built in 1977 at which time Don Bosco became an elementary amalgamating the elementary grades of Holy Redeemer Girls, Holy Reedemer Boys and Whitney Schools.

Other principles who worked at Don Bosco were John Strangis, Carl Currie, Maurice Gouthio and the present principle of the complex Bob Beaton.

For a number of years the school was home to the class for the Hearing Impaired.

Don Bosco served as a training ground for a number of Sydney Principles amoung whom were James Angus (Sham) MacDougall first Principle of Jamison . Sam MacDougall first principle of St. Anthony Daniel and the late John H. Morrison first Principle of Cornwallis School.



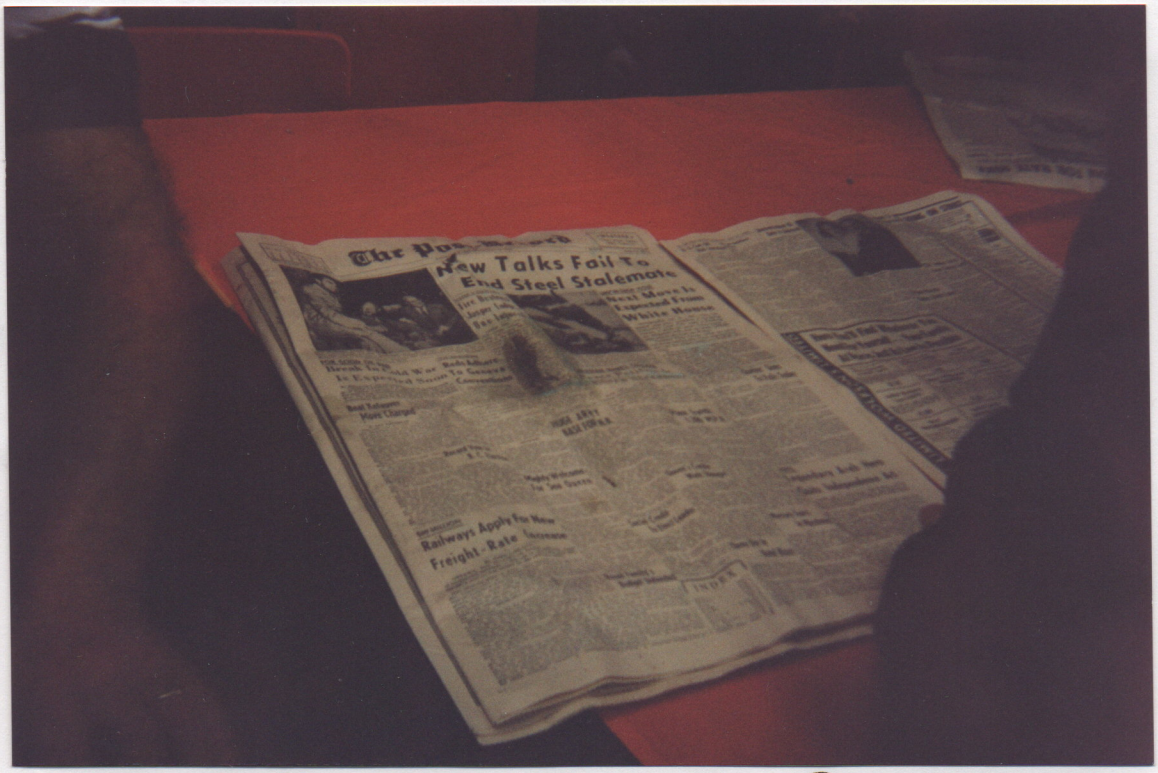
A picture of Don Bosco School.

The sign from Don Bosco School.

The inside of the envelope.

The outside of the envelope.

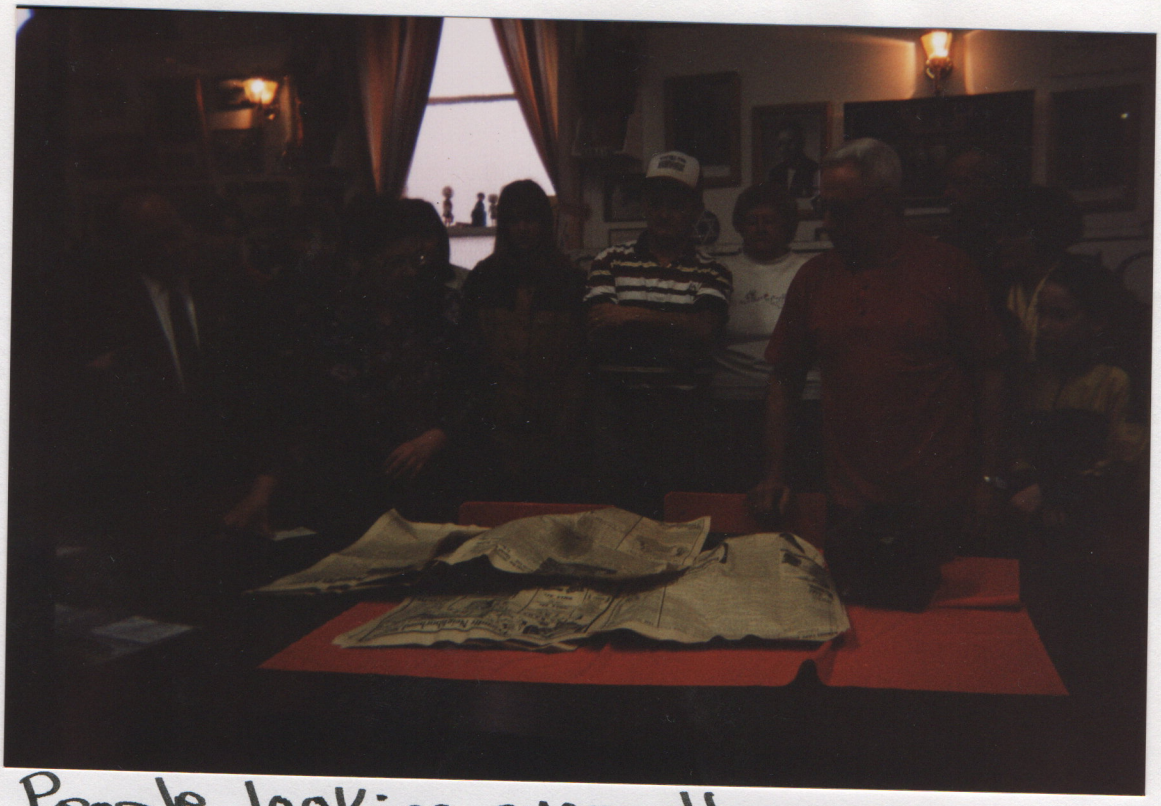
Charlie Barrington opening the time capsule.



One of the newspapers from inside the time capsule.

The back of Don Bosco School.

The Front of Don Bosco School.



People looking over the objects from the capsule

Kaz Siepierski looking at one of the papers

David Muise looking at the newspaper.

One of the teachers from Don Bosco -

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VAUGHAN MERCHANT/CAPE BRETON POST

Sandra Dunn, left, president of the Whitney Pier Historical Society, and vice-president Kaz Siepierski examine a mystery box recovered from the cornerstone of the Don Bosco Elementary School in Whitney Pier.

Mystery box found in ruins of Pier school

BY LAUREL MUNROE
CAPE BRETON POST

A mystery has emerged from the ashes of Don Bosco Elementary School in Whitney Pier.

The school, which was slated to be torn down to make way for a new public-private partnership school, burned to the ground in the early morning hours of March 17.

Following the fire, the Whitney Pier Historical Museum's board of directors contacted Cape Breton Regional Municipality Mayor David Muise to ask for the building's dedication plaque, dated 1952.

When board member Kaz Siepierski went to the demolition site to retrieve the plaque, he found it attached to a huge slab of marble and concrete.

"It was too big to carry back to the museum, so I asked them to knock off some of the concrete," Siepierski says.

"When they broke it open, there, encased in the concrete, was a sealed copper box."

The container, which could well be a time capsule, measures about 9" in length and is 5" wide and about 6" deep, he explains.

There is no lock on the box, but it is completely soldered closed.

So far, the society has been unable to determine the origin of the item, which remains unopened – for now.

"There was no record of this at the school," says Siepierski. "We've checked with some people in the community who were involved with the school, but no one seems to remember anything about it."

Siepierski finds the whole mystery intriguing.

"I mean, it's been sitting there for 47 years," he says. "If we didn't pursue the plaque, the time capsule would have gone to the dump."

The board is hoping someone will come forward with information.

"We want to let the public know we have it. I think curiosity's really going to hit people."

Board members will meet this week to decide how to proceed with a public box-opening, likely next week, says society president Sandra Dunn.

"There's an awful lot of interest in it," she says. "Our tiny museum won't hold all the people who will want to be there so we'll have to find a bigger place to hold the crowd we expect."

Anyone with information on the origins of the container may contact Dunn at 562-8454.

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RAY FAHEY/CAPE BRETON POST

Preparing for move

Jerry Dean 11, a Grade 5 student at Don Bosco Elementary School in Whitney Pier, paints a mural on the wall of the building the school will occupy following the March break. The former vocational school on Prince Street in Sydney will become a temporary school while a wrecking crew demolishes the Don Bosco building to make room for a new elementary school to be built on the site.

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Don Bosco time capusle to be opened today

BY LAUREL MUNROE
CAPE BRETON POST

A 47-year-old mystery involving a copper box and a fire ravaged school will be unravelled today.

The container was found in the ruins of Don Bosco Elementary School, Whitney Pier, which burned to the ground early St. Patrick's Day.

When Whitney Pier Historical Society vice-president Kaz Siepierski went to the site to retrieve the building's 1952 dedication plaque, workers broke open the concrete block it was attached to.

Inside, they found the copper box, which measures 9" by 5" by 6". There is no lock on the item, but it is completely soldered shut.

As a result of media attention generated following publication of the story in Tuesday's Cape Breton Post, Siepierski received a phone call Wednesday from a William Davis, 79, of Debert, near Truro.

"He ran a sheet metal contracting shop in Sydney River in 1951-52," explains Siepierski.

"M.R. Chappell was the contractor for Don Bosco and Woodill schools and he hired Davis to do some sheet metal work. (Davis) remembers making two copper time capsule boxes."

Siepierski says Davis recalls sealing the boxes shut but doesn't remember what was inside.

"Half the mystery is solved," Siepierski notes.

Charlie Barrington, former owner of Barrington & Vokey sheet metal works in Sydney, will open the box today at 2 p.m. at the Whitney Pier Historical Society Museum, 88 Mount Pleasant St. The event is open to the public.

VAUGHAN MIRCHANT/CAPE BRETON POST

Cape Breton Regional Firefighter Doug Huntington pours water on the smoldering aftermath of a fire early Wednesday morning that destroyed the former Don Bosco Elementary School in WhitneyPier.

School fire remains under investigation

BY STEVE MACINNIS

CAPE BRETON POST

The cause of a fire Wednesday that ripped through a Whitney Pier elementary school being demolished remains under investigation today.

Jim Gracie, operations manager with the regional fire service, said investigators were expected to be back on the scene today probing the remains of the structure which is being demolished to make room for a new school.

The majority of equipment from Don Bosco Elementary School was moved out last week to a temporary facility at the former vocational school on Prince Street which is also home to the Centre Scolaire Etoile de L'Acadie.

Don Matheson, director of property services for the Cape Breton Victoria Regional School Board, said the district did lose about $30,000 worth of other equipment – lockers, air handling system – which hadn't been removed prior to the fire.

The Primary-Grade 5 school was being torn down as part of the Department of Education's P-3 program. The new school will replace five other elementary schools.

The fire was reported just after midnight and Gracie said firefighters from Whitney Pier and Ashby stations responded The Pier station is only about two blocks away from the school.

Gracie offered high praise for firefighters who kept the blaze under control and from spreading to nearby homes. The school is located on a hill and high winds fanned the flames all night long. Gracie said the site was to be manned by security officers overnight until the brick walls have been torn down.

Matheson said students will begin classes Tuesday after the March break, as planned, at their temporary school.

RAY FAHEY/CAPE BRETON POST

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Capsule recovered

Sandra Dunn, president of the Whitney Pier Historical Society, holds a time capsule recovered from the cornerstone at the former Woodill Junior High School in Sydney. The capsule was placed in the building in 1952 during the laying of the cornerstone. The contents of the copper box will be revealed next week during an official opening ceremony, time and date to be announced.

Kilroy